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ABSTRACT

In Fall 1979, a survey was conducted to determine the attitudes and goals of a selected sample of students who had enrolled in academic transfer programs at 13 British Columbia community colleges, but who had not transferred to a four-year institution. The 24-item questionnaire asked students to provide information on: (1) full/part-time status while at college; (2) major; (3) change to a vocational program; (4) original reason for attending college and degree to which goal was met; (5) factors influencing college choice; (6) primary reasons for withdrawal from original college and for not attending a university; (7) potential influences on furthering their education; (8) importance of selected educational objectives; (9) highest level of education expected; (10) hypothetical source of educational financing; (11) current activities; (12) educational activities; (13) interest in vocational education; (14) field of employment; (15) length of time spent looking for a job; (16) job location; (17) educational requirements for current job; (18) education/job relationship; (19) usefulness of college education in achieving selected personal goals; (20) attitudes toward community colleges; (21) sex; and (22) age. The study report, in addition to an item-by-item analysis of 3,367 responses, summarizes broad findings in terms of the college academic program, the college student, and the college concept. (JP)

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A Follow-up Study of Non-Transfer, Academic Students from the British Columbia Community Colleges

- Summary Report -

Prepared for

B.C. Ministry of Education
and the
Academic Council of British Columbia

by

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PREFACE

In November 1979 the B.C. Ministry of Education, at the request of the Academic Council, initiated a study of non-transfer students from the academic program of the community colleges throughout British Columbia. B.C. Research was commissioned to undertake the project.

This report contains a summary of the information and findings generated from the study. For a broader discussion of the study, its overall objectives, detailed methodology and conclusions, the reader is referred to the main report from the project, "A Follow-up of Non-Transfer, Academic Students from the British Columbia Community Colleges - Technical Report."

Note: This Summary Report should be read in conjuction with the Technical Report.

I. INTRODUCTION

For a number of years considerable attention has been paid to the college student from the academic programs who transfers to a provincial university. While the transfer rate varies depending upon the source of information, the institution and the particular year, the figures indicate a rate in the range of 15 to 20 per cent. In other words, approximately four-fifths of college students enrolled on the academic (often called university transfer) programs do not transfer to a university. The follow-up study findings summarized in this report resulted from a mail-out questionnaire administered to a selected sample from these "non-transfer" students. Responses were obtained from 3,367 students, proportiately drawn from 13 of the 14 colleges.[1] These respondents represented a 50% return on the mail out survey.

The courses within the academic program are specifically designed for the university transfer function. Transfer credit is granted by the universities only after careful scrutiny of course content and instructor qualifications. As a consequence courses as designed by the colleges with a high academic emphasis.

Arising from the results of this study is the fact that some two thirds of non-transfer, academic students reported that they attended college for reasons other than preparation for transfer to university. Objectives listed by these students as important were occupationally related rather than academically motivated. From these results it would appear that the major portion of academic students in the colleges are not really interested in transfer to university as such. However, at the same time these students are either not sufficiently interested in a specific career, technical or vocational program or are unable to enter such a program because of enrolment restrictions.

[1]North Island College did not participate in the study.

II. CONCLUSIONS

It is difficult to do adequate justice to the plethora of observations which this particular study has produced. To a large extent, the data gathered in the research dramatize the extraordinary impact of the community colleges in British Columbia upon the lives of so many of its citizens, of so many ages, backgrounds, motivations, aspirations and life styles.

Perhaps the most general conclusion is that there is no "typical" student enrolled in college academic programs who can be conveniently classified by any set of criteria or any established description of a "college student".

This chapter provides a review of some of the broader findings that emerged from the study.

1. The College Academic Program

a) The study reinforced a fairly common hypothesis, which has been advanced on previous occasions in the literature, that the notion of "university transfer", as applied to the academic programs in the community colleges, is largely a misnomer. Evidently, students pursue academic credit courses more for their potential value and possible future use than for their immediate application to the process of transfer to other institutions.

Not only did many students express the view that transfer to university was not their primary goal, but several comments reflected the difficult conditions under which they pursued their current education, clearly making transfer to university a most improbable circumstance.

Comments from the questionnaire indicated a variety of socio-economic factors, family circumstances, geographic isolation and psychological barriers which contributed to the constraints

placed upon students' educational mobility. It was evident that, in many cases, the college experience had had a significant impact upon their lives. To other students, however, the colleges for one reason or another had proven to be a disappointment or an unrealized opportunity.

Even for many students who had made a successful re-entry into the learning environment, the college was effectively a terminal institution. Students in rural areas in particular found that degree completion at a university was an unrealistic or impracticable goal.

The study gave credence to the view that colleges provide academic courses and programs for large numbers of students for almost as many reasons as there are students. In this respect the colleges' longstanding commitment to the academic component of the curriculum is both defensible and desirable.

The comments and responses to the questionnaire items might well be interpreted as being in contradiction to those who view colleges essentially as institutions for the provision of vocational and technical training. It is obvious that, to many, the college is a source of intellectual stimulation which is locally accessible and, as such, represents a resource equivalent to the virtually inaccessible university.

b) There has been considerable reference in the discussion of results to the apparent analomoly connected with the notion of "university transfer" courses, in view of the stated intentions of a large percentage of the students who enroll in them.

Presumably if many students take these courses for personal enrichment, characteristics of university transfer courses such as examinations, grades and formalized instruction would be of little concern. It has been suggested in the comments that colleges might recognize the problem by being less concerned with

the "transfer credit" factors and more with general education.

At the same time, it is recognized that experience in this regard has been of little help. Colleges have had limited success, in the past, with "general" academic courses which do not carry university transfer credit. For some reason students have shown little interest in these courses.

Comments on the questionnaires which were directed at "standards" were supportive of raising, rather than relaxing, the quality of the courses. Apparently students expect and desire high standards.

Given all of the foregoing, colleges are faced with a considerable dilemma in how to approach academic courses for a most heterogeneous student clientele. The concerns of the universities must be recognized, as must student expectations and faculty expertise.

It seems that the only satisfactory answer lies with continued negotiation at the individual academic discipline level. Experience in the United States suggests an evolving autonomy for the colleges while, at the same time, retaining the confidence of the universities.

c) One apparent contradiction which emerged in the results was that which existed between students' stated views of the objectives of enrolling in post-secondary education and the program in which they enrolled.

While the majority indicated that vocationally related knowledge was of primary value, these students were enrolled in academic programs. There are a number of possible explanations for this phenomenon. Presumably, jobs are of concern in the long term for most students, whether they attend college or university. However, a general academic curriculum is considered complementary, rather than contradictory, to this objective. In this context, student behaviour is understandable.

In addition, other data indicates that many of the respondents in this study held a job during their college experience and, presumably, were less concerned about the immediate consequences of their study. This position is further supported by the students' response as to whether their college program was related to their job.

Finally, there is some indication that several students had enrolled in career or vocational programs after their initial venture into academic education. Others might well have not been able to enroll in the program of their choice immediately and had taken the academic program while waiting for the opportunity to eventuate.

In any event, the most appropriate conclusion to draw is that, irrespective of students' intentions with regard to a vocation, an academic program of study remains an attractive experience, particularly under the conditions provided through community colleges.

2. The College Student

a) Another often repeated assumption supported by the research was that an increasing percentage of mature, part-time and female students were enrolling in community colleges. It was possible to compare some of the demographic data with similar statistics gathered in previous studies. Since 1972, the increase in proportion of part-time students has been impressive. As there is a predictive relationship between part-time study with age and sex, the proportion of the two latter variables increased correspondingly.

While these results are not surprising, they do dramatize the evolving character of the college student population and suggest a need for colleges to adjust their priorities accordingly.

A further relationship deserving comment is that which exists between demographic variables and reasons for attending college. Personal enrichment is a prime goal of older students and colleges might bear this fact in mind in timetabling and course planning.

In periods of financial constraint, institutions tend to limit the number of courses in less traditional time slots. This practice denies the realities of the changing student population.

However, if the trend of the past few years continues, and there seems to be no reason why it should not, colleges will have to make even greater adjustments to accomodate the changing student clientele. These adjustments may include more non-traditional course scheduling and decentralized facilities.

As these are initiatives which tend to create problems with faculty working conditions, the challenges for administrators are obvious.

b) The study tended to support the view that the contemporary concept of "life long learning" was a practical reality. The substantial proportion of former college students who indicated that they were either continuing their education, in one form or another, or were intending to continue their education in the future, reinforced this assumption.

Another dimension to the subject was provided through the comments which revealed the backgrounds of many students. Several held professional degrees or technical qualifications, others had continued their interest in education for many years and some even referred to themselves as perpetual students.

The implication for institutions of post-secondary education, suggested by the foregoing, are also obvious.

c) One statistic regarding the accomplishment of students' original objectives in attending college is worthy of particular note. Of those students who indicated their intention as being either one or two years of preparation for university transfer, a fairly significant percentage, approximately a quarter, noted that they had changed their original goal for one which was more "appropriate". A similar percentage was found in those who stated that they came to college to determine their vocational interest.

In both cases, it may be concluded that the college has played a role in helping students make decisions regarding their academic or vocational futures. While this particular function of the colleges has been documented in the literature, particularly in the work of Burton Clark[1], there has been limited evidence to indicate its success.

For the colleges in British Columbia, at least, there is now some indication of their function in this respect.

d) To a limited extent, at least, the study results denied a minority view in the community that college students, particularly those in academic programs, were perpetual students who were not, or never intended to be, gainfully employed.

While the follow-up time frame was only nine months after the students' last enrolment in the college, the employment rate was quite high. Only 6% were job seeking and 2% were "unemployed", figures which, as noted earlier, were somewhat below provincial rates.

While it is true that some respondents were still full or part-time students, the overall record of employment is impressive.

[1] Burton R. Clark, "The Cooling-Out Function in Higher Education". American Journal of Sociology, May 1960, Vol. 65.

It might be concluded that those who seek education after compulsory schooling are also those who contribute to the workforce. In one sense, it could be argued that much of the cost of their education is borne through the taxes generated from their own earnings.

With respect to the kinds of jobs held by former college students it is evident that "white collar" occupations, clerical, professional, sales and managerial predominate. While it is tempting to conclude that former students hold such positions because of their college education (although there are certain contradictions to this argument provided in other data), such a conclusion must be downplayed.

It may well be that the same variables: motivation, intellectual curiosity and energy; contribute both to an individual's desire to attend college and his ability to hold certain positions in the workforce.

3. The College Concept

a) At the time at which the community college idea was being developed in British Columbia. the rationale for their establishment was based upon a number of essential criteria. Included in the latter were low cost, location within commuting distance in their region, reasonably open admission policy, comprehensive curricula and quality teaching and counselling.

The data gathered in this study tend to reinforce the conclusion that colleges have been successful in meeting many of the original criteria. Certainly cost and geographic accessibility were primary incentives for the greater proportion of their clientele in academic programs. If "particular program offered" may be interpreted as an expression of a comprehensive curriculum, this criterion was also met successfully.

However, for reasons which can only be hypothesized, the teaching reputation of the college and the perception of an intellectual environment seemed to attract a smaller percentage of students. This view was reinforced by the comments which were offered on the questionnaire.

Teaching and counselling met with mixed assessments by former students. While there were many who expressed considerable admiration for these two areas, there were several quite critical comments.

It might be suggested that colleges should spend more time and make greater efforts to ensure the quality of teaching and counselling. Institutions established with high priority upon these aspects of their operation cannot afford to allow indifferent or mediocre performances by their faculty. Judging from the responses to the questionnaire, students react strongly to unsatisfactory experiences with teachers and counsellors. Perhaps their expectations are unrealistic, perhaps they are more openly critical in view of their age and experience. But whatever the reasons, students are extraordinarily subjective in their judgments of college personnel. This conclusion underlines the vunerability of the faculty and dramatizes the challenges of college teaching.

b) The data gathered in the study does tend to support the view that there exists a reasonably large number of students who, largely for geographic reasons, are unable to complete a university degree and are somewhat frustrated after a successful college experience.

The wide dispersal of these individuals throughout the province suggests than an interior university would be of little use in meeting their needs. It does, however, indicate the potential value of the opportunity available through the Open Learning Institute.

c) There was some evidence in the data to support the view that involvement in post-secondary education is positively related to the existance of a college in the region. Previous studies[2] have indicated that participation rates are higher in such districts.

In this study the responses to the category "college was there", as an option in reporting important factors in the choice of a college, were in excess of 30%. In addition, students from "non-commuting" colleges, i.e. beyond range of a university, responded at a rate of almost fifty percent to this option.

While the term "college was there!" may be regarded as non-specific, it undoubtedly summarized the reason for college enrolment by a large number of students. While open to different interpretations, the data does tend to support the relationship noted above.

4. Summary

In conclusion, despite the difficulties encountered in carrying out a study of this type, it can be said that the exercise was worthwhile.

While the data reinforced certain assumptions about community colleges and the students which attend them, it did open others to question. More than this, however, the study exposed a behaviour pattern in society, related to education, which is in a state of evolution. Clearly, there were specific differences revealed in the characteristics of college students from those found in other studies conducted as recently as five years ago.

If colleges, universities and other institutions of tertiary education are to respond effectively to a changing clientele, it is imperative that they be cognisent of the variety of change and the degree to which it is occuring.

[2]Dennison, John D. et al, The Impact of Community Colleges.

For these reasons it seems essential that efforts be made to monitor the system accurately and regularly, to base policy and practice upon real, rather than assumed data, and to re-inforce the impression that the view of the broad community, students, employers and taxpayers are considered in the process.

In the context of the above, this particular study is merely a first step.

III. SURVEY RESULTS

%		
		1. DURING THE LAST TWO SEMESTERS (OR LESS) THAT YOU WERE ENROLLED AT COLLEGE, WERE YOU PRIMARILY: (Check one)
36.7	1 ☐	a full-time student (12 or more credit hours per semester)
60.2	2 ☐	a part-time student (less than 12 credit hours per semester)
3.0	N.R.	

(1)

Question No. 1 - Enrolment status, full-time versus part-time.

Over the past decade there has been a dramatic increase in the percentages of students enrolling at college on a part-time basis. The current predominance in the numbers of part-time students over full-time students carried through to the academic non-transfer student in the current study. Nearly two of every three students surveyed had been enrolled at college on a part-time basis. Two thirds of the females reported part-time study as compared to one-half of the males. Further to this, and not unexpected, was the tendency for the adult age student (aged 25 years or over) to study on a part-time program. A very heavy committment to part-time enrolment was found for Northwest College and Northern Lights. On the other hand Okanagan, Selkirk, and V.C.C. had a greater percentage of full-time students than found in the remaining colleges.

%		
		2. FOR THE TIME YOU WERE IN COLLEGE, IN WHAT MAJOR SUBJECT AREA WAS MOST OF YOUR STUDY? (Check one)
17.0	1 ☐	science, (math, biology, chemistry, etc.)
34.9	2 ☐	social science and humanities, (history, political science, psychology, etc.)
7.9	3 ☐	fine arts (visual arts, performing arts, etc.)
10.4	4 ☐	languages (English, foreign languages)
2.3	5 ☐	recreation and physical education
10.4	6 ☐	business (business related subjects such as bookkeeping, accounting, commerce, etc.)
10.5	7 ☐	general
6.7	N.R.	(2)

Question No. 2 - Major subject area of study

The Social Science and Humanities subject area continues to be the most heavily subscribed with one-third of the non-transfer students having studied in this area. Science, the next most popular was a distant second, enrolling 17 percent of the students. The distribution of students in various subject areas varied throughout the province. For example, at Northern Lights there was a very large percentage of students in the Social Science and Humanities area; at Okanagan and Selkirk colleges a greater percentage of students were involved in the Science area than found elsewhere; and at Malaspina the emphasis appeared to fall in the Fine Arts area.

The somewhat traditional sex breakdown was evident with more males than females enrolled in Science related areas and the reverse found for the Social Science subjects. Agewise, the adult age student was attracted to the Social Science field and Language more so than for other subject areas.

Students in the Science area tended to report as their reason for college attendance "to prepare for transfer to a university." "Personal enrichment" was most evident as a reason for college attendance amongst those enrolled in the Social Sciences, Fine Arts, and Language. While some of the students in these subject areas had a goal of transfer to university, the proportion was relatively small. This could well create difficulty in curriculum development if the desires of the students are to be met while at the same time maintaining a course credibility for transfer of credit to the provincial universities.

%		3. DID YOU AT ANY TIME DURING YOUR ORIGINAL ENROLMENT AT COLLEGE CHANGE FROM THE ACADEMIC TO A CAREER, TECHNICAL OR VOCATIONAL PROGRAM, OR VICE VERSA? (Check one)
34.2	1 ☐	no
5.4	2 ☐	yes, because I changed career goals
0.2	3 ☐	yes, because of counsellor's advice
1.9	4 ☐	yes, because more opportunity in another field
0.9	5 ☐	yes, because of unsatisfactory progress
0.6	6 ☐	yes, because I was dissatisfied with curriculum
3.8	7 ☐	yes, other
2.9	N.R.	

Question No. 3 - Change of program from that of original enrolment.

The great majority of the students (84.2%) did not change their program from the academic to career area or vice versa. The one exception was Vancouver Community College where approximately one-quarter of the students indicated a change of program. It may be that the large size of this college with the consequent opportunity to provide a greater range of programs and facilities has provided more flexibility in program selection than would be found elsewhere. Where changes did occur, regardless of college, these changes were mostly due to a change of career goal. College counsellors apparently had little impact in this particular area. Changes for negative reasons such as unsatisfactory progress and curriculum dissatisfaction were minimal for all colleges surveyed. For those students who did change programs because of a change of career goal, the college has provided a service that allows for experimentation in a program area. Most likely to change their goals were students who indicated either the desire to transfer to a university or the undertaking of a career program.

%		4. WHICH RESPONSE BEST INDICATES YOUR ORIGINAL REASON FOR ATTENDING COMMUNITY COLLEGE? (Check one)
13.0	01 ☐	to complete one year of college in preparation for transfer to university
19.6	02 ☐	to complete two years of college in preparation for transfer to university
0.8	03 ☐	to complete one year of college but not transfer to a university
1.2	04 ☐	to complete two years of college but not transfer to a university
1.5	05 ☐	to complete secondary school requirements
10.9	06 ☐	to upgrade or learn new skills or trade
23.7	07 ☐	for personal enrichment
12.9	08 ☐	to undertake a career program
0.6	09 ☐	to study until a job became available
2.6	10 ☐	to determine my vocational interest
8.1	11 ☐	undecided about my academic future
5.2	N.R.	(4-5)

Question No. 4 - Original reason for attending college.

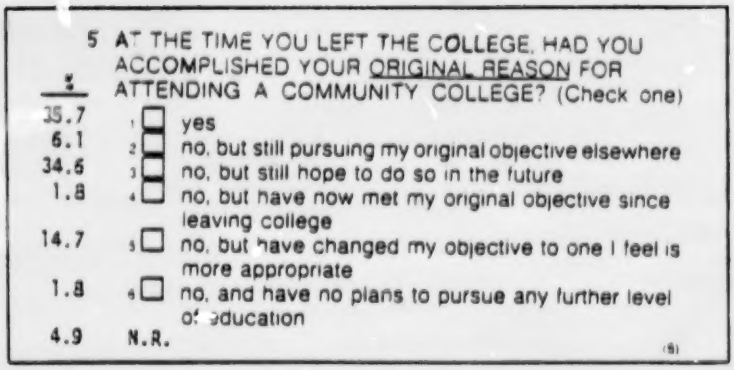
No more than one-third of the non-transfer students reported their original reason for college attendance as preparation for transfer to university. In other words, while these courses are specifically designed for the transfer function, some two-thirds of the students studied were taking the courses for reasons other than transfer. Generally, students in colleges located beyond a normal daily commuting distance to a university were as interested in preparing for transfer as those students at colleges within an easy commuting distance. Two exceptions to the above were noted. Students in Northwest College were least likely to be concerned with the transfer function and more liable to enroll for personal enrichment. At the other end of the scale was V.C.C. where the transfer function was uppermost in the minds of nearly one-half of the students.

It is clear that throughout the college system there are similarities and differences in the reasons expressed by the students for enrolment in academic courses.

With respect to differences between the sexes, nearly one-half of the males gave university transfer as their reason for attendance at college, while slightly less than one-third of the females

reported this view. Not unexpected was the fact that only one in five of the adult age students indicated transfer to university as a reason to be at college. Over one-half (57%) of the students indicating university transfer as their reason for attending college reported the acquisition of knowledge and techniques applicable to a vocational field as a most important objective of attendance at college.

Nearly one-quarter of the former college students had reported "personal enrichment" as a reason for college attendance. It was somewhat unexpected to find that 40 per cent of these students had a university degree as their ultimate educational goal.



5 AT THE TIME YOU LEFT THE COLLEGE, HAD YOU ACCOMPLISHED YOUR ORIGINAL REASON FOR ATTENDING A COMMUNITY COLLEGE? (Check one)

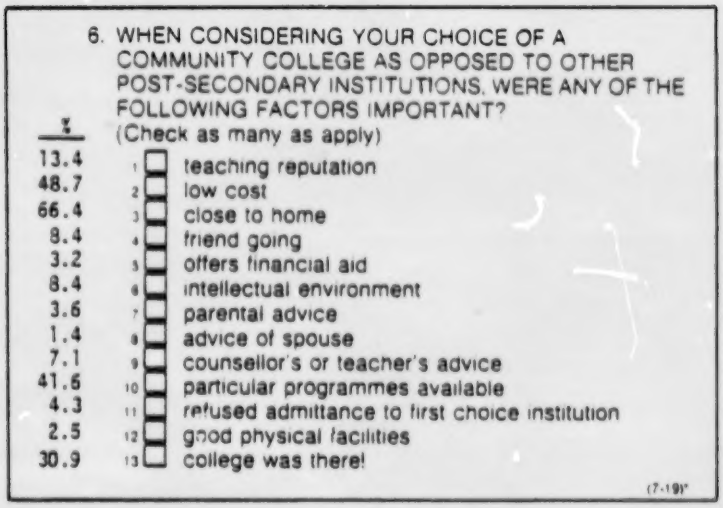
%		
35.7	1	yes
6.1	2	no, but still pursuing my original objective elsewhere
34.6	3	no, but still hope to do so in the future
1.8	4	no, but have now met my original objective since leaving college
14.7	5	no, but have changed my objective to one I feel is more appropriate
1.8	6	no, and have no plans to pursue any further level of education
4.9		N.R.

(8)

Question No. 5 - Accomplished original reason for attending a community college.

Regardless of the reason for attendance at college, just over one-third of the former students reported accomplishment of their reason for going to college prior to leaving or not re-enrolling. With the growth of the part-time study concept, it was not unexpected to find that a further one-third of the former students reported not accomplishing their original objective but hoped to do so in the future.

Students who had attended Lower Mainland colleges were found to be less likely to accomplish their original reason than those attending Island and Interior colleges. This is somewhat understandable when one considers the extra competition for student time evident in the Lower Mainland. Students from the province's two largest colleges had a greater tendency to change their plans to "more appropriate" ones. Once again, this could be a result of being able to provide a greater variety of courses and programs than found in somewhat smaller colleges. Equal proportions by sex indicated accomplishment of their goals.



6. WHEN CONSIDERING YOUR CHOICE OF A COMMUNITY COLLEGE AS OPPOSED TO OTHER POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS, WERE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING FACTORS IMPORTANT?
(Check as many as apply)

%		
13.4	1	teaching reputation
48.7	2	low cost
66.4	3	close to home
8.4	4	friend going
3.2	5	offers financial aid
8.4	6	intellectual environment
3.6	7	parental advice
1.4	8	advice of spouse
7.1	9	counsellor's or teacher's advice
41.6	10	particular programmes available
4.3	11	refused admittance to first choice institution
2.5	12	good physical facilities
30.9	13	college was there!

(7-19)

Question No. 6 - Important factors for choice of community college as opposed to other post-secondary institutions.

The factor mentioned by most students (66.4%) was that the college was "close to home". This aspect was of less importance to V.C.C. and Camosun students.

"Low cost" was second in importance and reported by one-half of the former students. This factor was more important to the male college age student (aged 24 years or less) than others. With the growing proportion of adult age students attending community colleges, it could be surmised that the cost factor of post-secondary education will become less of an influence in the future. The "low cost" factor was of less importance to students of interior colleges and of considerably more importance to students who attended large Lower Mainland colleges.

The "particular programmes available" were important to 42 per cent. The program aspect appealed more to the female than male, and to the adult age student more so than the college age student. Where the colleges were in more direct competition with a local university, the programmes available to the student were more important in the decision making process to attend college. For those colleges out of the university sphere of influence, the "close to home" factor became more important than "particular program available."

While the province's colleges often emphasize their instructional capability, the "teaching reputation" of these institutions was not a major factor in student choice of attending a college as opposed to other post-secondary institutions. It was noted however, that students from colleges located near a provincial university tended to consider the "teaching reputation" important more so than in colleges beyond a reasonable commuting distance from a university.

The very presence of a community college in the area, that is, the "college was there", motivated approximately one-third of the students to attend college. This aspect was particularly noted in colleges far removed from a university (where some 40 per cent responded to this factor) and particularly prevalent in the more recently established colleges where up to one-half of the students said that the mere presence of the college in the area was a major factor in their consideration.

%		7. IF YOU WITHDREW OR DID NOT RE-ENROLL IN YOUR ORIGINAL COLLEGE BEFORE ACHIEVING YOUR EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVE(S) INDICATE THE PRIMARY REASON FOR YOUR WITHDRAWAL (Check one)
23.6	01 ☐	question not applicable since educational objectives had been achieved
5.6	02 ☐	had inadequate financial means of support
2.4	03 ☐	needed to financially support my family
2.9	04 ☐	received no sense of accomplishment in college work
1.4	05 ☐	low grades
1.0	06 ☐	felt unable to do college work
17.9	07 ☐	had personal reasons
2.0	08 ☐	dissatisfied with the attitude of the college and college staff
4.6	09 ☐	lost interest in studying
6.6	10 ☐	wanted to obtain full-time employment
3.0	11 ☐	desired to learn a skill or trade not offered at the college
4.2	12 ☐	wanted to attend another post-secondary institution
24.8	N.R.	(20-21)

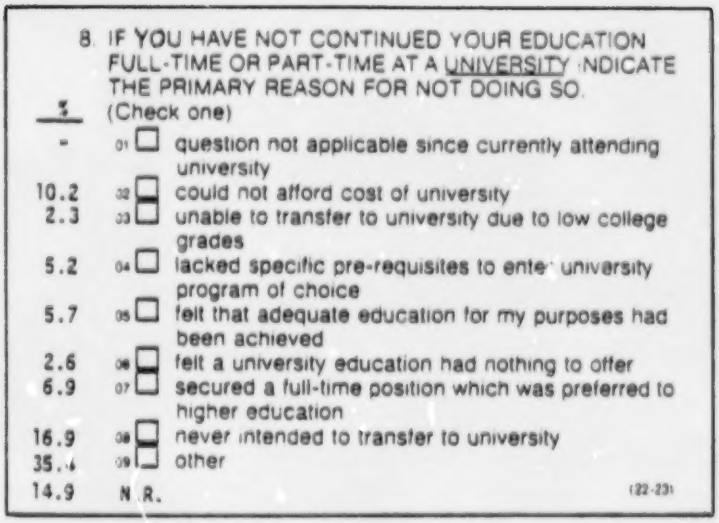
Question No. 7 - Primary reasons for withdrawal or non-re-enrolment at original college.

At the time of terminating their enrollment at college by either withdrawing or not re-enrolling, some one-quarter of the students reported attainment of their educational objectives. Unfortunately, an additional one-quarter of the former students did not respond to this question. "Personal reasons" were most often offered as a reason, especially in the case of females where double the proportion responded in this manner in comparison to the male.

Financially related reasons, often quoted as a main reason for leaving a college, was noted by only 8 per cent of the former students. Where finances were indicated, it was more likely to be reported by those students who had hopes of eventually obtaining a Bachelor's degree at university.

Where dissatisfaction with the college and college staff was cited as the reason for withdrawal, it was found to be predominant amongst those individuals who had indicated "no idea" as to their highest level of education expected.

On a college to college basis there was a wide range in the numbers reporting objectives achieved; from a low of 18 per cent to a high of 32 per cent. However, since a great variety of factors might play a role in determining student withdrawal, further analyses of these figures are best left to the individual institutions.



8. IF YOU HAVE NOT CONTINUED YOUR EDUCATION FULL-TIME OR PART-TIME AT A UNIVERSITY INDICATE THE PRIMARY REASON FOR NOT DOING SO.

%		(Check one)
-	01 ☐	question not applicable since currently attending university
10.2	02 ☐	could not afford cost of university
2.3	03 ☐	unable to transfer to university due to low college grades
5.2	04 ☐	lacked specific pre-requisites to enter university program of choice
5.7	05 ☐	felt that adequate education for my purposes had been achieved
2.6	06 ☐	felt a university education had nothing to offer
6.9	07 ☐	secured a full-time position which was preferred to higher education
16.9	08 ☐	never intended to transfer to university
35.4	09 ☐	other
14.9	N.R.	

(22-23)

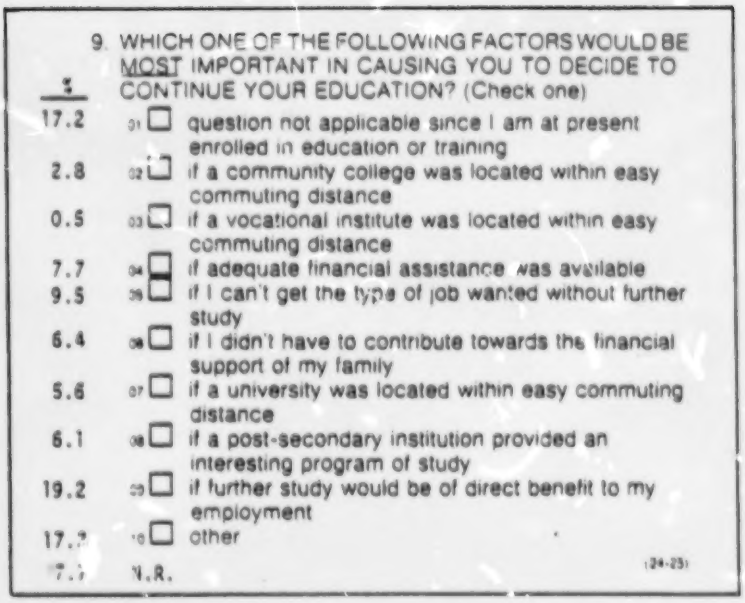
Question No. 8 - Primary reason for not attending university.

Question 8 was used as part of the study methodology to identify and remove from the respondent population those students who were attending a university but who had been missed, for a variety of possible reasons, during the computerized enrolment file match process. Consequently, by design, there were no students in the resulting "non-transfer" population responding to response number 01 of question 8.

A problem arises in interpreting the results of this question due to the fairly high percentages of students responding to the "other" category or indicating no response at all. One-half of the former students fell into these categories.

The most frequent reason for non attendance at university, reported by 17 per cent of the respondents, was that they "never intended to transfer to university." While differences in percentages were noted for individual colleges, there was no indication that students from colleges distant from a university were more prone to indicate no intention of transfer than students close to a university.

One in ten students replied they "could not afford the cost of university". A further eight per cent indicated academically related problems that prevented transfer and eight per cent reported that their educational purposes had been achieved.



9. WHICH ONE OF THE FOLLOWING FACTORS WOULD BE MOST IMPORTANT IN CAUSING YOU TO DECIDE TO CONTINUE YOUR EDUCATION? (Check one)

%		
17.2	01 ☐	question not applicable since I am at present enrolled in education or training
2.8	02 ☐	if a community college was located within easy commuting distance
0.5	03 ☐	if a vocational institute was located within easy commuting distance
7.7	04 ☐	if adequate financial assistance was available
9.5	05 ☐	if I can't get the type of job wanted without further study
6.4	06 ☐	if I didn't have to contribute towards the financial support of my family
5.6	07 ☐	if a university was located within easy commuting distance
6.1	08 ☐	if a post-secondary institution provided an interesting program of study
19.2	09 ☐	if further study would be of direct benefit to my employment
17.?	10 ☐	other
?.?	N.R.	(24-25)

Question No. 9 - Most important factor in causing you to decide to continue education.

Originally, the students included in the study had demonstrated some interest in post-secondary education by enrolling at the community college. Subsequently, these students disrupted their education. For these students it is of concern to determine what reasons, if any, would be important in causing an individual to continue their education.

While the location of a college close to home was of original importance in the decision to select a community college in preference to other post-secondary institutions, only 9 per cent responded that an institution close to home would be the most important reason to return to the educational scene.

Two exceptions to this were East Kootenay and New Caledonia where approximately one-fifth of the students replied that a university within commuting distance would be a deciding factor in causing them to continue education.

The most important single reason for return to study would be a practical one, that is, if it was to be of direct benefit to employment. Nearly one-third indicated a job related response. Students in Lower Mainland colleges reported this job related aspect more frequently than students from other colleges.

%	10. WHICH ONE OF THE FOLLOWING OBJECTIVES FOR ATTENDANCE AT COLLEGE DO YOU CONSIDER MOST IMPORTANT? (Check one)
54.1	1 ☐ to acquire certain knowledge and techniques applicable to a vocation or field of special interest
15.7	2 ☐ to acquire and use the skills and habits involved in critical and constructive thinking
3.9	3 ☐ to attain a satisfactory emotional and social adjustment
20.9	4 ☐ to develop a broad general outlook and familiarity with a variety of subjects
5.5	N.R.

Question No. 10 - Most important objective for attendance at college.

The acquisition of knowledge and techniques useful for a vocation or field of special interest was reported as a most important objective for attendance at college by over one-half of the former students. This figure is considerably higher than the one-quarter reporting this same objective in a 1975 provincial study.[1] It would seem reasonably clear that while these former students were taking an academic program at college, their main concern was a practical one of preparation for employment rather than the acquisition of skills needed in critical and constructive thinking. There were considerable differences in the proportions of students reporting this objective by individual college. For example, the lowest percentage (46.5%) and highest percentage (61.2%) were reported from two Lower Mainland colleges, colleges in communities which enrolled students from considerably different socio-economic backgrounds.

Just over one-third reported objectives of either gaining skills for critical thinking, or developing a broad general outlook on a variety of subjects. These latter two points would seem to be more consistent with an academic program than the job related objective. Once again there was no apparent pattern that would explain the differences in response percentages amongst individual colleges.

[1] Dennison, John D. The Impact of Community Colleges, A Study of the College Concept in British Columbia. Vancouver, British Columbia: B.C. Research, November, 1975.

%		11. WHAT IS THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION YOU EXPECT TO ATTAIN DURING YOUR LIFETIME? (Check one)
1.2	01 ☐	graduate from secondary school
4.8	02 ☐	trade qualification
1.7	03 ☐	one year at a community college
5.4	04 ☐	two years at a community college
7.9	05 ☐	technical institute diploma
21.9	06 ☐	bachelor's degree
8.6	07 ☐	professional degree (law, medicine, dentistry, etc.)
8.3	08 ☐	master's degree
3.1	09 ☐	Ph.D.
31.3	10 ☐	have no idea
5.7	N.R.	(27-28)

Question No. 11 - Highest level of education expected.

Nearly one-third indicated they had "no idea" as to the highest level of educaton expected during their lifetime. This rather high figure could be indicative of the experimental nature of attending college. It may be that a number of these students just do not know their intellectual capabilities and therefore wish to test themselves through attendance at college before making a decision regarding future education.

A university degree was still high on the list of expectations for 40 per cent of the students with half of this group indicating a hope for a graduate level degree. Even students from colleges located far beyond daily commuting distance to a university reported a desire for a university degree in relatively the same proportion as students nearby a university.

While a major proportion (54.1%) of the former students had stated that acquiring of knowledge and skills applicable to a job was the most important objective of college attendance, no more than 13 per cent replied that attaining a trade qualification or technical institute diploma was their expectation. It may well be that these students consider degree attainment at university as specific preparation for a vocation.

Considerable differences between the responses of males and females were observed, with males far more decided about their educational expectations than females. Age-wise, little differences in responses was evident, although perhaps the adult age students were less sure of their educational attainment than college-age students.

12. IF YOU WERE TO ENROL IN FULL-TIME STUDY WITHIN THE NEXT YEAR WHAT WOULD BE THE PRIMARY SOURCE OF FINANCING YOUR EDUCATION? (Check one)

%		
8.1	01 ☐	question not applicable since currently enrolled full-time
8.9	02 ☐	parents and/or family
10.2	03 ☐	B.C. government student assistance (grants and loans)
15.5	04 ☐	full-time job (35 hours or more per week)
11.3	05 ☐	part-time work during the academic year
0.9	06 ☐	scholarship or bursaries (other than B.C. government financial assistance)
32.9	07 ☐	personal savings
4.8	08 ☐	other
7.5	N.R.	

(29-30)

Question No. 12 - Primary source of financing full-time study if enrolled during next year.

As it appears that the cost factor is not a significant factor in the continuation of education for the vast majority of students, it is of interest to learn how the former students would finance their education if a return to full-time enrollment should occur within one year.

One of five students would rely on others to finance their education. Either parents, family, or governmental student assistance would be a source of financing for these students. It was also noted that individuals responding in this manner were more likely to have indicated academic problems as a reason for discontinuance at college.

On an individual college basis, students from interior colleges had a greater tendency to rely on "personal savings", while V.C.C. students placed a greater emphasis on "part-time work during the academic year."

%		13. WHICH ONE OF THE FOLLOWING BEST DESCRIBES WHAT YOU ARE DOING NOW? (Check one)
45.7	01 ☐	employed: full-time (35 hours or more per week)
9.5	02 ☐	employed: part-time (less than 35 hours per week)
9.6	03 ☐	employed and taking education (full or part-time)
10.6	04 ☐	full-time student
1.4	05 ☐	part-time student
10.3	06 ☐	full-time household/family duties
5.3	07 ☐	presently unemployed, but seeking a job
2.2	08 ☐	presently unemployed, and not seeking a job
5.0	N.R.	(31-32)

Question No. 13 - Present activity.

Roughly one-half of the former students were working, with a further one in ten indicating they were employed and taking education. As might be expected, the more traditional pattern was evident as far as sex breakdown was concerned. For example, nearly two-thirds of the males were employed on a full-time basis as compared with two-fifths of the females. Further, some 15 per cent of the females were involved in full-time household/family duties.

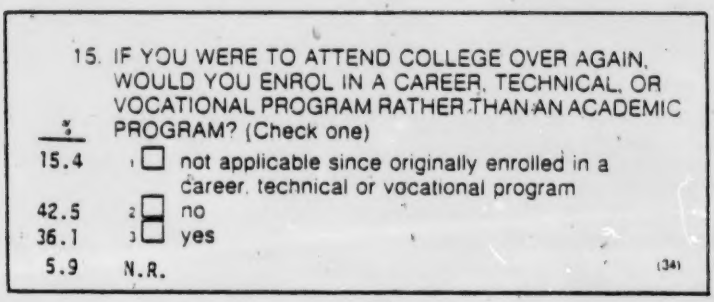
%		
36.0	1 ☐	question not applicable since not continuing post-secondary education
37.3	2 ☐	formal education (courses or programs for credit)
15.5	3 ☐	non-credit courses (adult education, continuing education courses)
11.2	N.R.	(33)

14. IF YOU ARE CONTINUING SOME FORM OF POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION, INDICATE WHICH TYPE OF EDUCATION. (Check one)

Question No. 14 - Type of post-secondary education.

In question 9, 17.2 per cent had responded they were currently enrolled in education yet here in question 14, a total of 52.8 per cent indicated they were involved in some form of post-secondary education. Reasons for this difference are unclear. It may be in the students' interpretation of the questions themselves. Nevertheless, from this question it appears that well over one-third of the former college students are involved in some form of educational courses or programs for credit.

There was a general consistency in the proportions of students from individual college taking "formal courses". In the case of non-credit courses, the proportion of students did vary somewhat but no clear pattern was evident.



15. IF YOU WERE TO ATTEND COLLEGE OVER AGAIN, WOULD YOU ENROL IN A CAREER, TECHNICAL, OR VOCATIONAL PROGRAM RATHER THAN AN ACADEMIC PROGRAM? (Check one)

%		
15.4	1 ☐	not applicable since originally enrolled in a career, technical or vocational program
42.5	2 ☐	no
36.1	3 ☐	yes
5.9		N.R.

(34)

Question No. 15 - If enrolled in college over again, what program would be undertaken.

Some 15 per cent of the former students indicated they had started their college study on a career program and then by the time of this study had switched to an academic program.

Of the remaining students whose original enrollment at college was on an academic program nearly half indicated that if they had it to do over again they would enroll in a career program. Whether this should be looked upon as a criticism of the academic program, or courses that make up such a program, remains to be seen. It may be that, inspite of counselling, the student just does not quite understand what an academic program is all about. Or, it may be that the student needed to experiment with academic study. Nevertheless, with the prevalent expression that learning for a job is a major objective of college attendance, it comes as no surprise that such a large portion of the student body would, if they had it to do over again, enroll in a non-academic program.

16. IF YOU HAVE BEEN EMPLOYED FULL OR PART-TIME SINCE LEAVING COLLEGE, IN WHAT TYPE OF BUSINESS OR INDUSTRY HAS THE MAJOR PORTION OF YOUR WORK BEEN? (Check one)

%		
19.3	01	clerical (clerk, secretary, etc.)
0.5	02	farmer (own farm)
5.3	03	managerial (own business, company manager, executive)
2.4	04	mining, logging, fishing, farm work
13.9	05	professional (doctor, lawyer, teacher, nurse, graduate engineer)
6.4	06	sales (retail business, insurance, real estate)
3.8	07	semi-skilled work (factory, mill worker)
4.2	08	service (armed forces, police, motel employee)
4.3	09	skilled worker (construction, production, tradesman)
2.9	10	technical (technologist, electronic technician)
2.9	11	transport, communication (telephone, bus, newspaper)
4.8	12	unskilled worker (labourer)
15.2	13	other
13.8	N.R.	

(35-36)

Question No. 16 - Type of business or industry involved in since leaving college.

While the academic programs at the college are not specifically geared to provide job skills, it would appear that former students were reasonably successful in obtaining employment and, generally, in business or industry areas commensurate with a general college education. Nearly one in five indicated they were in either a "professional" or "managerial" category.

One-quarter of the females indicated employment in either managerial or professional positions as compared with only 16 per cent of the males. It may be that the college experience is assisting the female in upgrading her skills and allowing her to take a more equal place with males in the employment world. The lowest proportion of students reporting employment in managerial or professional activities was indicated by students attending a college in a community generally recognized as having a higher percentage of parents of managerial or professional background.

%	17. HOW LONG DID IT TAKE YOU TO FIND A JOB AFTER LEAVING COLLEGE? (Check one)	
11.8	1 ☐	question not applicable since have not worked since leaving college
41.7	2 ☐	had job before leaving college and continued in it
20.4	3 ☐	less than one month
13.3	4 ☐	one to six months
3.3	5 ☐	more than six months
9.4	N.R.	(37)

Question No. 17 - Length of time to find job after leaving college.

A major proportion of the students (41.7%) indicated they had their job prior to leaving college and continued in it after terminating their enrolment at college. Approximately one-fifth of the former students required no more than one month to locate a job once college study was terminated. There were no differences by sex evident. The adult age student, as would be expected, was more likely to continue in a job held while attending college than was the case for the college age student.

Students at Selkirk College were least likely to have had a job prior to leaving college, while students at Northwest, and Northern Lights colleges were most likely to have their job prior to termination of college enrollment.

%		18. WHERE WAS YOUR FIRST JOB SINCE LEAVING COLLEGE LOCATED? (Check one)
11.6	01 ☐	question not applicable since have not worked since leaving college
1.7	02 ☐	Peace River and Northeast B.C.
2.8	03 ☐	Northwest B.C.
1.2	04 ☐	Central Coast (Sechelt to Prince Rupert)
5.6	05 ☐	Okanagan
3.6	06 ☐	Kootenays
7.6	07 ☐	Central B.C. (Merritt to Prince George)
11.5	08 ☐	Vancouver Island
38.5	09 ☐	Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley
3.7	10 ☐	in Canada but outside B.C.
1.5	11 ☐	outside Canada
10.7	N.R.	(38-39)

Question No. 18 - Geographic area location of first job after leaving college.

Some students from each college found it necessary or desirable to move away from the geographical area of their college in order to take their first job after leaving college. The largest proportions who left their area were found for those who attended the following colleges: Cariboo (26%), Malaspina (23%), Okanagan (20%), New Caledonia (22%), Northwest (28%), and Northern Lights (19%).

19. IN APPLYING FOR A JOB WITH YOUR PRESENT EMPLOYER, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING WERE APPLICABLE?
(Check as many as are appropriate)

%		
21.7	1	☐ question not applicable as not presently employed
7.4	2	☐ required to have a college education
4.6	3	☐ employer asked for proof of college education
9.8	4	☐ employer asked about college achievement or "grades"
2.8	5	☐ required to provide references from college
19.0	6	☐ not required to have a college education but college study was helpful in obtaining job
40.3	7	☐ college education did not make a difference in obtaining job

(40-46)*

Question No. 19 - Relationship of College Education to Application for Employment.

The academic programs at the colleges are not designed specifically for employment preparation. As a result it was not unexpected to find that most were employed in positions that the former student felt did not require a college education. In addition to this, or possibly as a consequence of, very few employers actually required proof of education.

The view that college education did not make a difference in obtaining a job was expressed by 40 per cent of the former students and was more prevalent in the case of males than females.

20. IF YOU PRESENTLY HOLD A FULL OR PART-TIME JOB, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS APPLY? (Check as many as are appropriate)

%		
23.0	1 ☐	question not applicable as not presently employed
19.6	2 ☐	currently using skills learned in my major subject area
17.9	3 ☐	currently using skills learned outside my major subject area
29.7	4 ☐	did not learn any skills at college that would help in this job
5.9	5 ☐	the experience of going to college helped decide my vocational interest
4.1	6 ☐	the experience of going to college helped in my transition from secondary school to employment
17.4	7 ☐	just the experience of going to college helps in this job

(47-53)*

Question No. 20 - College to job relationship.

The college academic transfer courses are designed primarily to qualify for transfer credit to one or more of the provincial universities. They are not designed to relate directly to employment. In spite of this, nearly one-fifth of the former students reported that they were using skills learned in their major subject area. Further to this 17.9 per cent indicated use of skills learned outside their major subject area. Not unexpected was the one-third who expressed an opinion that they "did not learn any skills at college that would help" in their job.

Six per cent were of a view that the college experience was helpful in deciding a vocational interest. On the other hand nearly one in five felt that "just the experience of going to college" was of help to them in their job.

21 DID YOUR COLLEGE EXPERIENCE HELP YOU ATTAIN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING GOALS?
(Check one for each item)

	Was a goal *	%	Goal Attained Yes	%
a) to get certificate or diploma	1 ☐	51.7	2 ☐	40.3
b) to determine my vocational interest	1 ☐	55.4	2 ☐	60.9
c) to prepare for a new career	1 ☐	64.2	2 ☐	55.8
d) to appreciate art and culture	1 ☐	48.2	2 ☐	74.6
e) to meet people and make friends	1 ☐	58.9	2 ☐	89.2
f) to get a general education	1 ☐	69.9	2 ☐	87.2
g) to upgrade my job skills	1 ☐	48.5	2 ☐	66.7
h) to improve basic skills (eg. reading, writing, etc.)	1 ☐	54.3	2 ☐	83.5
i) to be able to choose from a variety of subjects	1 ☐	51.3	2 ☐	81.8

(54-62)

Question No. 21 - College experience and goal attainment.

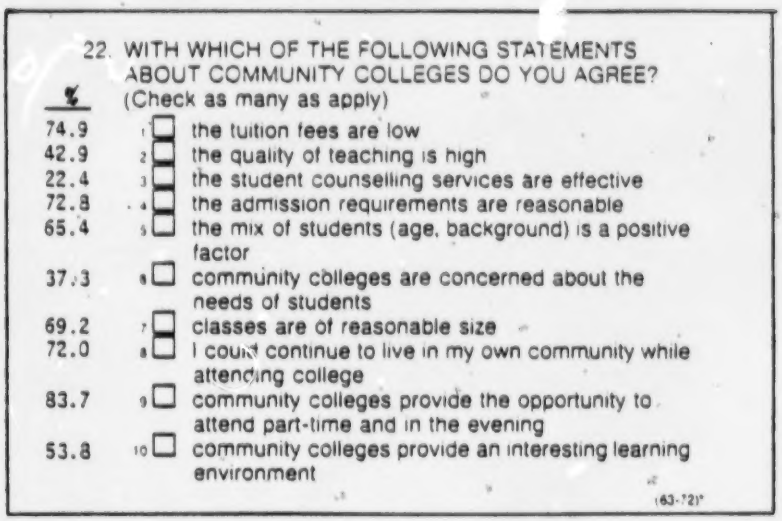
To get a general education was reported as a goal by 69.9 per cent of the respondents. This was considerably higher than the 20.9 per cent figure reported in question 10, for the response that the major objective for college attendance as "to develop a broad general outlook and familiarity with a variety of subjects."

To upgrade job skills, to learn an appreciation of art and culture, and to get a certificate or diploma were least likely goals, reported by about one-half of the students in each case.

For those students whose goal was a certificate or diploma, only 40 per cent reported attainment of the goal. On the other hand the highest reported achievement of goals was in the case of "meeting people", and in getting a "general education."

Goal achievement for those who wished to prepare for a new career was relatively low, only 55.8 per cent. Of course it must be repeated that the academic courses are <u>not</u> designed for a career.

*Note: Response percentages to this part of the question have been re-calculated so that the figures indicate the percentage of students for which the statement <u>was</u> a goal rather than the percentage for which the statement was <u>not</u> a goal.



22. WITH WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS ABOUT COMMUNITY COLLEGES DO YOU AGREE? (Check as many as apply)

%		
74.9	1 ☐	the tuition fees are low
42.9	2 ☐	the quality of teaching is high
22.4	3 ☐	the student counselling services are effective
72.8	4 ☐	the admission requirements are reasonable
65.4	5 ☐	the mix of students (age, background) is a positive factor
37.3	6 ☐	community colleges are concerned about the needs of students
69.2	7 ☐	classes are of reasonable size
72.0	8 ☐	I could continue to live in my own community while attending college
83.7	9 ☐	community colleges provide the opportunity to attend part-time and in the evening
53.8	10 ☐	community colleges provide an interesting learning environment

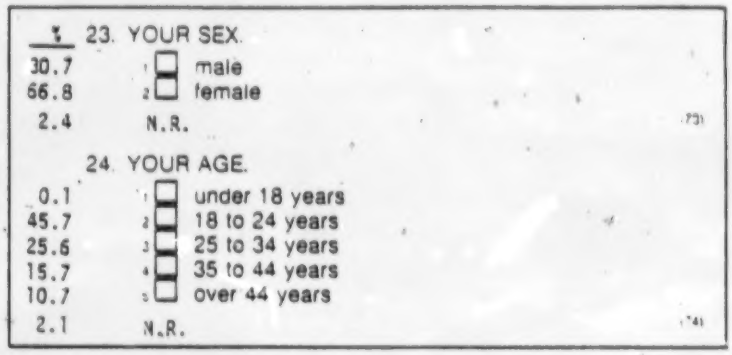
(63-72)*

Question No. 22 - Agreement with college characteristics.

A majority of students, at least three quarters, agreed on the following: tuition fees are low, admission requirements are reasonable, opportunity for part-time and evening study is provided, and it is possible to live in ones own community while attending college.

It will be recalled that only 13.4 per cent reported the teaching reputation of the college (question 6) as an important factor in the choice of a college over other post-secondary institutions. After attendance at college some 43 per cent reported an impression that the quality of teaching was high. For a teaching institution, this percentage may be considered as somewhat low.

Somewhat less than one-quarter replied that student counselling services were effective.



%	23. YOUR SEX.	
30.7	1	male
66.8	2	female
2.4		N.R.

	24. YOUR AGE.	
0.1	1	under 18 years
45.7	2	18 to 24 years
25.6	3	25 to 34 years
15.7	4	35 to 44 years
10.7	5	over 44 years
2.1		N.R.

Question No. 23 and No. 24 - Sex and age characteristics of respondents.

One in three respondents to the Information Sheet were male, a proportion that was slightly less than that for the full population of non-transfer, academic students identified in the study. Forty-six percent of the respondents were of college age, that is, under twenty-five years of age. This was slightly less than the 52 per cent observed for the full population of non-transfer, academic students.

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